

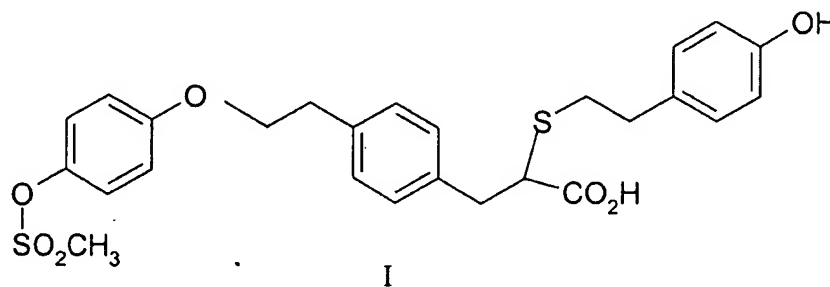
**IN THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listing of claims in the application.

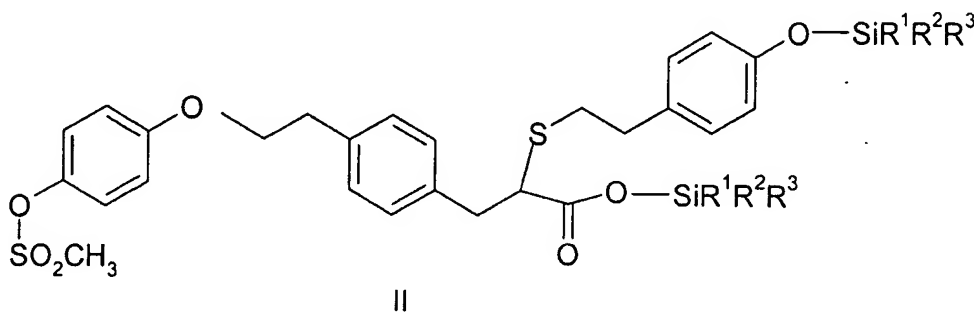
**Listing of claims:**

Claims 1-5 (cancelled).

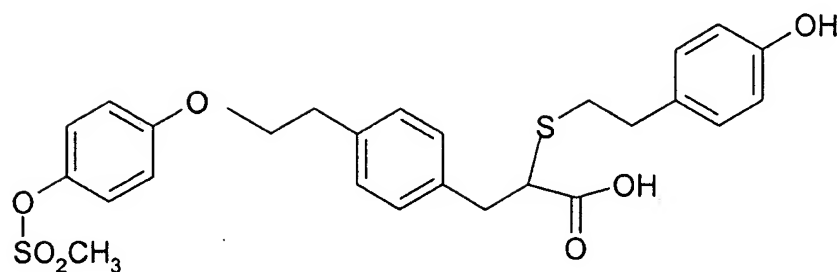
**Claim 6 (currently amended):** A process for the preparation of substantially racemic 2-{[2-(4-hydroxyphenyl)ethyl]thio}-3-[4-(2-{4-[(methylsulfonyl)oxy]phenoxy}ethyl)-phenyl]propanoic acid according to claim 4 comprising reacting a compound of formula I



enriched in one enantiomer with a chlorosilane of formula  $\text{ClSiR}^1\text{R}^2\text{R}^3$  in which  $\text{R}^1$ ,  $\text{R}^2$ , and  $\text{R}^3$  independently represent a  $\text{C}_{1-6}$  alkyl group or aryl in the presence of a nitrogenous base in the presence of an inert solvent at a temperature in the range of 0 to 150°C to give a compound of formula II

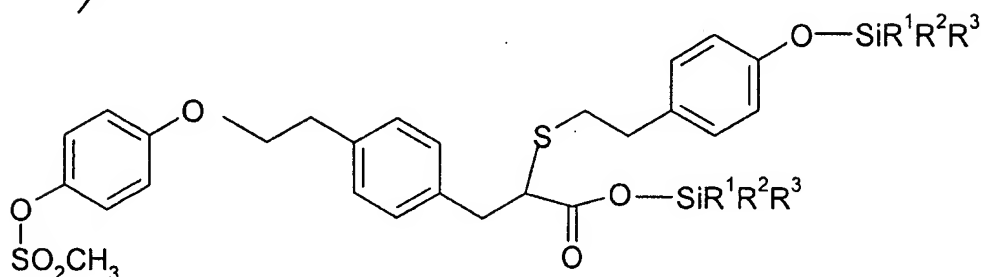


in which  $\text{R}^1$ ,  $\text{R}^2$ , and  $\text{R}^3$  are previously defined which is hydrolysed to give a racemic compound of formula III



III

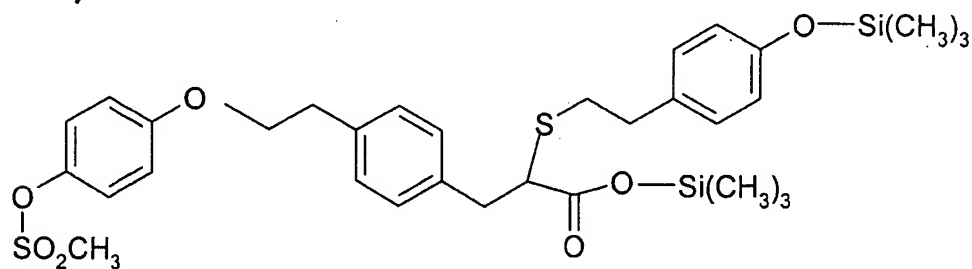
<sup>2</sup>  
Claim ~~7~~ (original): A compound of formula II



II

wherein  $\text{R}^1$ ,  $\text{R}^2$ , and  $\text{R}^3$  independently represent a  $\text{C}_{1-6}$  alkyl group or aryl.

<sup>3</sup>  
Claim ~~8~~ (original): A compound of formula IV



IV

<sup>4</sup>  
Claim ~~9~~ (new): A process according to claim ~~6~~ wherein the chlorosilane is selected from: chlorotriethylsilane, chlorodimethyl~~tert~~butylsilane, chlorotriphenylsilane and chlorodimethylphenyl silane.

<sup>5</sup>  
Claim ~~10~~ (new): A process according to claim ~~8~~<sup>1</sup> wherein the chlorosilane is chlorotrimethylsilane.

<sup>10</sup>  
Claim ~~11~~ (new): A process according to claim ~~8~~<sup>1</sup> wherein the nitrogenous base is selected from 1,8 diazabicyclo[5.4.0] undec-7-ene, a trialkylamine, an optionally substituted pyridine or an optionally substituted imidazole.

<sup>7</sup>  
Claim ~~12~~ (new): A process according to claim ~~11~~<sup>6</sup> wherein the nitrogenous base is 1,8 diazabicyclo[5.4.0] undec-7-ene.